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Most of the Nosu manuscripts are kept by the Pee-mo in their houses, not far from the wood fires. The smoke rapidly turns the colour of the bamboo paper, and soon gives it the appearance of antiquity. A comparatively recent book thus looks old, and readily deceives one who gets hold of it.

Similar to the Chinese, the Nosu writing is from top to bottom of page. It is vertical and not horizontal. Unlike the Chinese, however, it begins at the left of the page and book.

Here are a few Nosu words with Chinese equivalents:

Nearly all the books I have obtained have been books dealing with diseases and demon possession. These books form the wizard's stock in trade for the casting out of these

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538 demons, and so curing disease. A page from one of these
789 books I have roughly translated as follows :—

Tsi-mu Ku-tu-tu !
Call your tiger to ride swiftly from the Sunset,
Call your tiger to attack my enemy,
Call your tiger to injure him,
Call your tiger to prevent his conception,
Call your tiger to destroy his whole offspring !
There goes the tiger to capture !
Look ! The tiger !
Don't stray aside into the dense forests !
Don't turn and wander up the steep precipices !
Look ! The tiger has got him !
Ah ! The tiger's tongue reaches my enemy !

Another manuscript deals wholly with the demon of leprosy, and is a call to the dragon god, the special god of the Pee-mo and his allies, to drive away the evil spirit which is the cause of the terrible disease. The chant describes how the animals on the hill-sides help in the search for the demon, which changes into various shapes to escape capture, but all in vain. The powerful allies of the wizard and the potency of his cursing at last lead to the capture of the spirit villain, who is forthwith cast into oblivion with a final

You snake leper demon ! You frog leper demon ! Out ! Out !

A few of us, assisted by the Society of Lepers for India and the East, are trying to do something to help the many lepers that exist and suffer among these western hills of China. I am afraid the wizards' curses and their whole army of dragon and allies will not do much to bring success to our campaign.

538 After getting quite a number of the books which form the
773 wizard's stock in trade, I at last got hold of one that dwelt with the origins of things. I have been told that there are

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other books similar to this, but I have only succeeded in getting one such book. The first five pages of the manuscript copy I have deal with the origin of the most powerful spirit, sometimes spoken of as "The Heavenly Father and Mother." Then there are four pages dealing with the beginnings of rain, snow, the sun and the moon. This is succeeded by four pages on the origin of animals, and lastly a few pages on the beginnings of man. The manuscript states that the first snow that fell on the earth was of three colours, red, yellow and white. By-and-by this coloured snow turned into twelve men. Just why the number was fixed at twelve, I do not know, though possibly there is some connection with the twelve months of the year, months, of course, being moons. Three of these men started ploughing the land, but, like many other farmers of modern times, they soon found themselves up against great difficulties. The troubles of these early agriculturists rose from the fact that God had, for some reason or other, determined to send a flood on the earth. The three ploughmen noticed that each day some young men and maidens from another world drove flocks of wild boars to root up the land that was being tilled.

After the boars had rooted up the earth the young people came along with brooms and swept everything clean. In this way it was impossible for a seed to sprout or grow. As this kind of thing continued, the three brothers resolved to try and put a stop to the work of the destroyers. The eldest brother proposed that they should catch and kill all the young people from the other world. The third brother proposed that they should cut them all in pieces. The second brother was more humane, and said: "Let us invite them all in and give them a hearty meal. Do not let us kill

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them." The proposals of the three brothers became in some way known to the sweepers of the boar-rooted-up soil, and they determined to reward the second brother for his kindness of heart. They sent word to him that God did not wish the soil tilled, as He was going to send a flood on the earth.

As he had been kind to them, they would tell him how to save himself when the day of the great flood came. Their advice was to take wood and make a large cupboard in which he could sleep at night. The second brother followed this advice, and those who gave it returned home. Twelve days after this the flood came. The second brother floated out on his cupboard boat and saved the lives of a lot of different creatures. Among others, he saved the snake, the bee and the crow. The first brother, meanwhile, had got into an iron box and was drowned. When the floods abated, "Number Two" was left alone. By-and-by he got tired of this loneliness, and wished for a wife. The only place where there were any women to be had was where God was living. The lonely man would have liked to have spoken for one of the divine daughters, but he had no one to present his request for him. This old-world tale is written from an Oriental standpoint, and therefore all marriages need to be arranged by some go-between. The snake, seeing the difficulty the man was in, offered to speak for him, in return for the kindness the man had showed him at the time of the flood. But the snake was also confronted with a difficulty, for he was unable to travel as far as the house where the father of the daughter lived. The man overcame this difficulty by carrying the snake around his neck, and in this way they came to God's house. During the night the snake set to work to help his friend, and did so by biting

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one of the daughters of the household. The young girl was 538
in great trouble, and there was no one to cure her. The man 773
in quest of a wife then came forward, and offered his services on condition, if successful, that he might have the daughter as his wife. The distressed father agreed. The girl was cured of her snake-bite, and the man wished for the completion of the bargain, but in this, as in many similar cases, the father refused to keep his word. The man went away disappointed. Later on he resolved to try again, and had as companion on this visit the bee. The bee imitated the snake, and stung the girl in her face. There was the same proposal by the man, on the same terms, which were accepted. This time, after the cure, the man was allowed to take the girl away with him as his wife. The father resolved to do his best for the young couple, and on their departure gave them supplies of all the seeds they needed. There was, however, one seed he did not give them, and that was the hemp seed. This old-world Nosu Eve got out of this difficulty by going back home and stealing the seed which had been withheld from them. One wishes he knew the origin of such an interesting story. The adventurous wife stealing the forbidden seed makes a picture very much like another story with which we are more familiar. And yet some people persist in saying that the East and the West are for ever separated. When it comes to questions concerning Eve and her adventures, ancient or modern, there is not much difference, but a great family likeness.

Whether there will be any permanent value in these Nosu 000
manuscripts one cannot yet say. It would be a great discovery if some of these were found to refer to early Chinese history, or to the times when the Chinese first came in